DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 098 012 RC 008 211

| | |
|---|---|
| TITLE | The State of Navajo Education. |
| INSTITUTION | Navajo Tribe, Window Rock, Ariz. |
| PUB DATE | Apr 74 |
| NOTE | 78p.; Papers prepared for Federal Policy and Navajo Education Conference (Albuquerque, New Mexico, April 1974) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF-$0.75 HC-$4.20 PLUS POSTAGE |
| DESCRIPTORS | Accreditation (Institutions); *American Indians; Bilingual Education; *Board of Education Role; Certification; *Decentralization; Early Childhood; Educational Equality; *Educational Objectives; Educational Quality; *Educational Responsibility; Speeches |
| IDENTIFIERS | *Navajos |

ABSTRACT

Ten working papers covered the following topics: (1) Centralized vs. Local Schools, (2) Self-Determination and Contracting, (3) Implications of the Tribal Plans in Education, (4) Navajo Professionals (Indian Preference), (5) Public Schools and Navajo School System, (6) Standards (Certification and Accreditation), (7) Bilingual Education, (8) Guaranteed Education, (9) School Board Authority, (10) Early Childhood. In general these papers raise questions which primarily relate to the concepts of self-determination, localization, tribal involvement, educational standardization, bilingualism, educational guarantees, functional Navajo school boards, and early childhood development programs, all of which point to a growing concern with and dedication to self-determination. (JC)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ED 098012

CONFERENCE
FEDERAL POLICY AND NAVAJO EDUCATION
Albuquerque Convention Center
April 2,3, 1974

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRO
DUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM
THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGIN
ATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS
STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRE
SENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

# THE STATE OF NAVAJO EDUCATION

## Paper #1 Centralized vs. Local Schools

THE NAVAJO DIVISION OF EDUCATION
The Navajo Tribe
Window Rock, Arizona

EC008211

RECEIVED
NOV 11 1974

# CENTRALIZED VS. LOCAL SCHOOLS

## PART I - ABSTRACT

The Navajo school system has changed, in the last four (4) decades, from a single (Bureau) school system characterized by small one-community schools to a multiplicity of overlapping school systems (Bureau and public) characterized by large "non-community" schools. These large "non-community" schools were justified at the time of their development, on the grounds that they cost less money per student than did smaller one-community schools. This paper questions the current validity of these assumptions, suggesting that such schools probably provide less effective education for the students and that they deprive communities of the "education" involved in learning to run their own schools, i.e., that in a more comprehensive analysis, large, "non-community" schools provide less real education: or, put another way, because they provide less real education, real education "costs" more per capita in such schools.

It is suggested that only the Tribe has the potential for coordinating the transition of the current "non-community" school system into a truly Navajo school system in which each community would, in time, have and control, its own school (s).

## PART II: PERSPECTIVE

The Navajo Reservation today is a crazy-quilt of overlapping school districts. Relatively few schools serve children from a single community. Relatively few communities send their children to a single school - or a single school system. This lack of congruence between school districts and communities can only be explained historically.

In the late 20's, the government began to work with Chapters.

The "Chapter", a formalization of the Navajo natural community, has come to be the basic political unit of the emerging Navajo Nation.

In the mid-30's, the government, reversing a decades-old tradition of off - (and later, on-Reservation) boarding schools, began to build community day schools on the Navajo Reservation. Many, if not most, of the existing schools were begun at this time. Poor roads, resistance to stock reduction, a perception of Anglo education as being irrelevant, and other factors limited the use of these schools. But a basic school system was established: while not all communities had schools, most such schools served a single community. While there could not be said to be parental control, there was parental involvement: only concerned or involved parents tended to put their children into school.

World War II changed Navajo attitudes toward schools and education: Navajos came to seek and demand more and better schools. In five years or so, 1948-1953, school attendance leaped from 50% to 90% of all school-age children.

The Navajo population growth rate is still probably one of the highest in the country. The population may well have tripled in the last three decades. Most of the population is young. The great expansion of the number of children in school has been accomplished by the expansion of the Bureau school system and by the creation of public school systems.

The result has been the creation of the overlapping Bureau boarding-school and public day-school districts which are the basic feature of the complex Reservation school system today. (While observers have identified as many as eight different school systems on the Reservation, most children are in either Bureau or public schools. This paper, then, tends to confine discussion to these two systems.)

There has been a major shift in Bureau schools from day to boarding schools. Bureau schools, serving now 40% of the school-age population, tend to take those students the public day schools can't or won't take on a daily basis. Two (2) stages might be perceived in the development of the current Bureau boarding school system.

In the first state, the tendency was to expand the earlier day schools in a number of communities into somewhat larger boarding schools. Rather simple cost-analysis led to the construction of larger and larger schools: schools of 600 to 1,000 students came to be optimally "efficient". The last half of the sixties saw the Bureau beginning to 'consolidate' schools. Large new schools were constructed (such as Chuska, Dzil... , Many Farms and Toyei) while smaller, older community schools were closed.

The public schools seem to have begun on the Reservation as schools for employees' children. With the assimilationist Indian policies of the 50', large sums of federal monies began to be made available for public school construction and operation on and near the Reservation. School districts were created or expanded in the three (3) states that divide the Reservation. Public school construction and expansion has gone apace until today 55% of the school-age population is served by public schools.

The pattern of school construction has been somewhat different in Arizona tha in the other two (2) states. A single large school district in Utah takes a large portion of the Navajo students in that state. These districts, although based off Reservation, have (perhaps because of their size) built schools at some new sites on the Reservation. The Arizona portion of the Reservation, however, seems to be characterized by school systems based in the emerging

on-reservation towns; these systems have built few schools other than those in that town.

While there are some small Bureau schools, and some Bureau day schools, the Bureau system seems to have become essentially a system of large boarding schools. And while there are some small public schools, and some with relatively short bus routes, the public school system seems to be characterized by large day schools often with some rather long bus routes. Both systems (Bureau and public) now seem to be characterized by large schools serving districts no longer congruent with existing Navajo community boundaries. The result has been a relative lack of real community involvement and community control. A conspiracy to deprive Navajo communities of the right to, and the right to control of, schools of their own could not have been more effective than the last quarter-century's drift toward the "non-community school".

The larger Bureau schools tend to be multi-community schools. In the emerging towns of the reservation, most of the children of that town attend public day school. The Bureau schools left in these towns are not attended by children from the surrounding communities. Because of the distance invoved, it is difficult for parents to get into the school often enough to have substantial involvement. And Bureau School Boards, often with members from a number of Navajo communities, are considered to be only "advisory". Geographical distance and the lack of framework for the exercise of real control of the schools has precluded community control of Bureau schools.

The situation in the public schools is somewhat more complex. The off-reservation and the on-and-off reservation school districts have been controlled, until relatively recently, by non-Navajos. While most on-reservation school

districts have had, in recent years, largely Navajo boards, the board members have tended to represent the emerging towns the schools are located in; the more rural communities have seldom been represented on these boards. Since many of these schools take in a number of communities, distance alone makes it difficult for the more rural community members to be involved in their child's school. (The Biglan report suggests that as few as 16% of all Navajo public school parents, rural or sem-urban have ever attended a PTA meeting at their child's school). And until recently, real community control has been limited by state policies, inertia and a lack of independent educational expertise. In most public school districts board members are still heavily dependent upon their superintendent as their only source of educational expertise.

It is the contention of this paper that the lack of congruence between the school districts and Navajo communities is neither necessary or desirable. It will be argued that ways can be, and should be, found to restore control of schools to Navajo communities.

The basic argument for the large "non-community" school has had to do with "costs". It has been argued that it costs less, per-pupil, to operate and administ large schools than small schools. And until better roads are built, that it costs more, per-pupil, to service and supply many smaller schools than a few large schools.

Within the limited context, of "money divided by pupil's" these arguments may be (or may not be) correct. Within the context of the larger "social costs", they are almost certainly wrong.

It is the contention of this paper that it is the very size, and resultant impersonality, of Reservation schools that has led to the deplorabley low standards of most Navajo schools.

Large schools tend to have poorer attendance. Poorer attendance results in a vicious circle of poorer academic performance and lower academic expectations.

Large schools tend to limit parental parent-and-child interaction. Where children ride long distances to and from school, or board at the school, their parents' control over them becomes much more tenuous. Spending more time with their peers than with their parents, children tend to shed the values of their parents and to adopt the apparent values of their peers.

In the large school, there is relatively less personal interaction between children and adults. The very size of a large school tends to reduce classes to more-or-less manageable 'herds' of students with little real personal interacti with transient, non-Navajo, teachers. Navajo standards of behavior break down but non-Navajo standards do not come to prevail in their place. A new, deperson-alized, sub-culture, neither Navajo nor Anglo, seems to be emerging---one that does not seem to lead to significant degrees of success or satisfaction in academi or social matters for most Navajo students.

At a time when the Anglo educational community has begun to appreciate the long-neglected virtues of smaller schools, (one study suggests the optimum elementary school size to be 250 students) multi-level or multi-age classes, and parental and community involvement and control, Navajo schools seem to have been moving, ever more rapidly, in the opposite directions. Can these trends be reversed?

It is the contention of this paper that these trends can be reversed. But that to do so will take time and great deal of effort.

How might this be done?

It would seem that it is the incredible diversity of overlapping school systems, each responsible to some entity other than the community, that precludes the development of community-controlled schools on the Reservation. Someone must coordinate the development of such schools if they are to come to serve Navajo communities. It seems rather unlikely that the public schools with 20-30 districts in three states will be able to do so. It seems unlikely that the Bureau would be allowed to do so. It would seem then that only the Tribe has the potential for restoring some sort of order to this crazy-quilt of "non-community" schools.

It is suggested here that the Council needs to make it a major objective that all future school construction on the Reservation be coordinated so that every Navajo community, including those now without schools, come to have at least its own pre-school and elementary school. Tribal policy would come to be that each child should be able to attend at least pre-school and elementary school in his own home community, be it as a day student or a boarder. Not only is there the need for a coordination of all future construction but there is the need to develop new political forms of school governance which will enable each community to have a reasonable degree of control over their children's schools. This will require the best efforts of all parties now involved in Navajo education over an extended period of time. Hopefully, by the fact that many of those parties have come together here today, it may be said that this long and difficult but very necessary task is begun.

Given the difficulty and complexity of task, some will ask, "But is it really necessary?" At a time when Anglo education has become so centralized, is it necessary for Navajo education to 'go back' to a de-centralized school system?

To 'recapitulate', as it were, the development of the centralized school system?

One of the truly difficult problems before the Navajo Tribe today is the need to re-empower its rural communities which still make up the majority of the population. While the Tribe has become increasingly more powerful and sophisticated in its dealings with the outside world, the increasing complexity of these relations has given rural communities relatively less control and understanding of the forces that affect the communities from without. It is argued here that the community school and the co-op store are perhaps two of the relatively few complex 20th century institutions that rural communities have some hope of controlling and understanding. And that, having learned to do, rural communities can come to control and understand other, more complex, institutions. In the last analysis, then, it is not a question of the necessity to 'go back' but of going forward to a de-centralized community-controlled Navajo school system.

PART III: ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

(1) The basic question therefore is, how can ways be found to restore control of schools to local Navajo communities?

(2) How can the trend toward large consolidated schools be reversed?

(3) By what means can such consolidated schools be decentralized into smaller units which serves student populations within the boundaries of local Navajo communities?

(4) How can new forms of political mechanism be set up which will allow Navajo parents to have real control of their children's education?

CONFERENCE
FEDERAL POLICY AND NAVAJO EDUCATION
Albuquerque Convention Center
April 2, 3, 1974

# THE STATE OF NAVAJO EDUCATION

Paper #2: Self-Determination and Contracting

THE NAVAJO DIVISION OF EDUCATION
The Navajo Tribe
Window Rock, Arizona

# SELF-DETERMINATION AND CONTRACTING

## PART I - ABSTRACT

On July 8, 1970, almost four years ago, the President said the goal of the government was "self-determination without termination". On March 8, 1974, Senator Edward Kennedy repeated the same message, and last year Congress passed Senate Resolution Number 126, reflecting Congressional support for this policy.

Forrest Gerrard, the man who looks after much of the business of the Senate Interior Committee in Washington, recently reported that Senate Bill 1017, the Indian Self-Determination and Educational Reform Act was quoting, "an Indian Bill----your bill, the best bill ever written for Indians". Part of Senate Bill 1017 passed the Senate on March 25, and now it looks like Self-Determination, especially regarding contracts with Tribal organizations is going to be law.

PART II - PERSPECTIVE

When did it begin? Self-Determination has always been the exclusive personal property of any free people. So ours began in the dawn of our history. It was passed down to us from our first ancestors. Yet some politicians seem to offer it to us now as a gift from them. Some of the offers ask us to pay a price, a high price to secure our self-determination. It is a sad commentary on human justice, but many Indian people, and their tribal governments, seem willing to pay the price, to buy back something we really should already own.

Definition

This is what self-determination is.

It is the right to choose, the right to choose how we live, how we govern ourselves.

The Origin of the Problems

Didn't we govern ourselves before the White man came? Yes, we had a system of government that worked well for our people under the conditions that then existed and we then chose the system we used to educate our Navajo children. We were a sovereign Nation, the Navajo Nation.

We are still a sovereign Nation, nothing in the Treaty of 1868 or any subsequent agreement took away our sovereignty or denied us the right to self-determination.

Are we asking the United States government to give us self-determination? Are we about to accept a trade?

It looks that way. It sounds that way. Perhaps, over one hundred years ago, after the treaty, when the Navajo Tribe was weak from fighting wars and tired from the Long Walk, someone (not BIA, they called it the War Department then) assumed some unjust powers over us. The Navajos were busy rebuilding houses that had been burned down, re-planting orchards, trying to get seed corn, livestock to breed. Even though those things were ours as part of the treaty, perhaps our hard-pressed ancestors began paying an unjust, and unnecessary price for them. They may have started, right then, trading off a little self-determination, the unfair trade might go like this.

Navajo farmer: "Give me some seed corn. It is mine, under the treaty agreement."

Agent: "All right, if you agree to allow part of the money for seed to go to pay for the salary of the men who weigh it. And part is mine, for my trouble talking about it. And part is for record-keeping, etc."

The Problem

This was the first type of concession that illegally deprived us of our rights to self-determination, and it worked so well that a whole government structure was built just to keep it going. That structure changed its name from "War Department" to "Bureau of Indian Affairs." And it determined a lot of things for the Navajos. If Congress, in keeping with the treaty, sent us a dollar, the BIA determined that ninety cents went to administration, and ten cents for seed corn, and a little for livestock so we could build our herds.

It was only a few years ago that a figure was released which indicated that there was one Bureau of Indian Affairs employee for each 17 Indians. Would a sovereign nation choose to put so many dollar-dividers into a system intended to deliver services? No. The top-heavy bureaucracy must have been created by agents of a different Nation. Navajos would not, and do not now, choose to live under such an administrative nightmare. If it gets to be any worse, the time might come when this story will be true.

A man was sitting in his plush Bureau of Indian Affairs office crying. Tears ran down into his deep, thick carpet. His associates gathered from similar offices all up and down the hallway. "What's wrong? What happened?" They asked. "My Indian died!" he said. "I'm out of a job."

At the rate we have been going, there will still be a strong Bureau when the last Indian has died. I suppose the last words he will hear will be from the Bureau of Indian Affairs--"Self-Determination."

Because, the high price we might have to pay is termination. The government may be saying--"We will give you back your self-determination if you will let us cancel the treaty." There are some who say that we will lose the last of our sovereignty when we get the maximum amount of self-determination.

The threat is serious. The questions remain. How can we regain control of our destiny?

The past can teach us much. Our people must learn to do the things we allowed others to do for us while we were rebuilding the strength of the Navajo Nation.

We must train Navajos to provide economical, efficient services to our people. We must look at every Bureau's position. If it isn't needed, work to abolish it. If it is needed, train a Navajo to do it better. If the bureaucratic system has failed to provide basic skills to our people, we ourselves must provide them, even if it means starting with our first grade children. Let's fill those positions with competent Navajos.

It is a big job to undertake, this self-determination. But not as big as the one which was done by our starving, ragged ancestors who returned from the Long Walk. Look what they left us.

Look around. We are rich in numbers, resources, and determination. A sovereign nation doesn't lose by making its people free. It becomes stronger.

The Solution

The first important step should be taken for our children. Education will determine how they think, how strong they are. We must decide on a course and work for self-determination in education. To have real meaning the decisions must be Indian, and every tribe must decide for itself. We will not find meaning in a series of decisions made in Washington which attempt to cover all tribes at once. Self-determination is a joke if the wishes of the Navajos are forced on the Utes, and if the Eskimo decisions are forced upon the Navajos. And it is even worse to claim that an all encompassing plan made by the Washington bureaucrats is in any way a Navajo plan.

So we must determine our needs and objectives at home, among ourselves, on the reservation.

We must do a good job of clearly stating the needs and objectives.

We must submit our plan to achieve our objectives. We must hold the government to every aspect of our treaty rights as we act to achieve those objectives, making sure that we are not trading off our sovereignty.

It is important that our plan have its own time-table, established by ourselves. Otherwise the speed by which we might be forced to implement our plans could destroy them.

Contracting and What it Means

The word from Washington these days, always on the same line with "Self-Determination" is "Contracting".

This can be a very good thing for the Navajo Nation, It can also be a very clever method of allowing us to destroy ourselves. To accept contracting we have to accept a whole new field of responsibilities.

The responsibility for good management, the responsibility for fiscal control, and the management and proper use of money and we have to avoid being manipulated by unscrupulous persons who like the word "contract" so they can misuse dollars intended to educate our children.

Summary

We may not be entirely ready to assume all of those responsibilities. But we are ready to assert our basic human right to self-determination, and to establish our own time-table.

When more of the resources committed to our people have reached them, particularly in education, and when our decisions have caused the necessary improvements, we will be able to handle the responsibility.

PART III - ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

1. How can the Navajo people regain control over their own destiny - Self-Determination - without giving up the trust provisions of the treaty?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CONFERENCE
FEDERAL POLICY AND NAVAJO EDUCATION
Albuquerque Convention Center
April 2, 3, 1971

# THE STATE OF NAVAJO EDUCATION

Paper #3: Implications of the Tribal Plans in Education

THE NAVAJO DIVISION OF EDUCATION
The Navajo Tribe

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

# IMPLICATIONS OF THE TRIBAL PLANS IN EDUCATION

## PART I - ABSTRACT

The Navajo Nation has an inherent sovereign right to educational self-determination and control over education efforts for its people. At the same time, the federal government has a responsibility to support these educational efforts.

Historically, the educational systems available to the Navajo have been imposed systems of the dominant society; systems which have had assimilation as their goal.

The establishment of a full management role for the Navajo Tribe in education is the only workable solution.

The key to achieving this full management role in education is the implementation of Navajo Division of Education's proposed Navajo Tribal Education Agency plans.

Federal, State and Tribal financing of a unified educational effort is crucial. The fiscal management system, however, must be in the hands of the tribe.

The eleven programs proposed by Navajo Division of Education form a sound basis for implementing a full management role for the Navajo Nation.

A strong and genuine commitment from the federal government, Bureau of Indian Affairs' Navajo Area Office, the Tribal Administration and Council and all other groups involved will be needed to reach the goals of the Navajo people for Navajo education.

The responsibility of the various states with regard to Navajo education is not clear. State responsibilities and relationships with the tribe must be defined.

PART II - PERSPECTIVE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The history of Navajo education is well documented in many books, studies and monographs. Often lacking in these documents, however, is the Navajo point of view regarding the events of history affecting the education of the Dine.

A succinct outline from this point of view is to be found in the monographs produced by the Navajo Division of Education: "Strengthening Navajo Education" and "Eleven Programs for Strengthening Navajo Education" and will not be repeated here. We would like to stress some points in this historical development that bear on the subject of this paper.

From the beginnings of contact between the Navajo and the non-Indian, Navajo education has been characterized by attitudes that have, in the long run, been counter-productive. Education was viewed as a process of "civilizing" the native American and assimilating him into the dominant culture. Many non-Indians felt that if Navajo children were taken away from the home environment and culture and educated in the "white man's ways" the older people would die off in time and the so called "Indian problem" would be solved.

One hundred years has proved this philosophy wrong, yet remnants still remain in the attitudes of planners, administrators and teachers.

The erosion of Indian rights regarding land, water and certain aspects of self determination are well documented but the erosion of Indian educational rights has not been as clearly defined or illuminated.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Treaty of 1868 was negotiated in a context of Indian sovereignty--one nation within another. Yet the erosion of Navajo educational rights began in the treaty itself. Article VI states, in part, "...to teach the elementary branches of an English education..."

The Dawes Act of 1887 (the Allotment Act) attempted to break up land holdings of tribes and to make small farmers of them. This too had its educational implications, coming in a period of agrarian emphasis in the dominant society.

It should have been no surprise that the Navajo were not eager to adopt an educational system, methods and techniques which they perceived as imposed by the dominant society and coercively assimilationist in philosophy and intent. This concern is still present today.

The Navajo Nation is a sovereign power as recognized by treaty and legislation. This inherently includes sovereignty over educational efforts as well. The federal responsibility for supporting Indian educational efforts seems clear under the Constitution and the Treaty of 1868; the implication that responsibility for support carries with it automatically federal or other outside control of educational policy, administration and curriculum is a presumption without foundation.

The Supreme Court has upheld the rights of Indian tribes to self government and powers of sovereignty (ex parte Crowdog). Can the rights of Indians to choose and control their manner of education be separated from their rights to sovereignty and self government?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Navajo self determination in education has suffered from a lack of commitment in terms of the federal trust responsibility. It has suffered from a lack of appropriate operational mechanisms and from the confusion of multiple, imposed educational systems on the reservation.

The major flaw in Navajo educational programming has been historically and remains today, the lack of the Navajos' involvement in and control over the educational efforts intended to serve them.

Since the 1890's public schools have been involved to some extent in Indian education. Public schools on the reservation did not begin to have an effect until the late 1950's. Public school districting on the reservation often followed sources of assessed valuation rather than existing tribal political subdivision or a service area concept based on Navajo felt needs.

The responsibility of states in Indian education remains ill-defined and the subject of much controversy just as does the responsibility of states to Indian citizens in general.

With the advent of the "Great Society" programs of the 1960's a new dimension and "layering" of educational programs took place. Again, the implementation of Navajo control and involvement frequently fell by the wayside. A new game form came into existence--grantsmanship. Inadequate and uncoordinated training programs conceived without Indian involvement, proliferated in the quest for the federal education dollar. Although efforts to gain Navajo involvement have improved somewhat, there is still a gross lack of coordination and effectiveness in the conduct of these many and varied

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

projects. Responsibility for the conceptualization, development and coordination of the programs is beginning to shift to the Navajo Tribal administration. The tribe's efforts in economic development must be tied closely to its efforts in education, manpower training and management capability development.

Federal funding guidelines and proposal funding processes were developed primarily by the east coast educational establishment for black oriented needs and programs, and, although this is changing today, much of this orientation still remains.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PART III - ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

A number of vital issues facing the Navajo Nation in its efforts to exercise its sovereign rights in the realm of education:

1. Navajo Control over Navajo Education

   The major issue is not whether or not the Navajo can or should control their educational programs and delivery systems, but how that control should be actualized.

The long range goal should be the establishment of a full management role for the Navajo Nation. The only viable route toward this goal is the establishment of a Navajo Tribal Education Authority as described in "Strengthening Navajo Education." The plans set forth in this monograph provide the basis for an orderly transition in a realistic time frame.

Funding is always closely tied to control. Therefore, the entire fiscal process will require keen examination and far reaching revisions. The Bureau of Indian Affairs must support these efforts with more than tokenism. The commitment must be genuine.

The establishment of a Navajo Tribal Education Authority would create an entity through which the Navajo Nation could begin the exploration and definition of its relationships with the states in educational matters and the responsibilities involved.

Just as the commitment of the federal government to a full management role for the tribe must be valid and genuine, so must the commitment of the administration and tribal council of the Navajo Nation be genuine and total.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

2. Navajo Educational Personnel Development

If the Navajo Nation is to assume a full management role in Navajo education, the Navajo personnel required to do so must be available and prepared to do so.

In order for Navajo education to be fully unified, with a culturally relevant curriculum utilizing a bilingual and bicultural approach, Navajo personnel must be available at all levels from top management of the system to the paraprofessionals in the classroom.

It is unfortunate but true that members of a cultural minority must not only match the training and competency required for similar positions in the dominant society but must surpass them in order to assure the credibility and success of the program.

The programs outlined by the Navajo Division of Education are a beginning toward this goal. They will have to be expanded as the linear action plan progresses.

The personnel development programs of the B.I.A. seem to be geared more to state teacher and administrator training requirements than toward specific Navajo needs and the competencies required in a bicultural setting. There are notable exceptions to this in the realm of bilingual education but the basic philosophical concepts of bicultural education could hardly be considered to permeate the B.I.A. reservation school system. Likewise, the adoption of this philosophical base has not yet met with much success in the public schools.

Bilingual-bicultural education cannot and should not be an "add-on" program or a special class. It must be the foundation upon which curriculum and educational programs are based.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

3. The Development of a Unified Responsive Fiscal Management System

A full management role must include fiscal management as well if it is to succeed.

The federal government has a clear responsibility for Navajo education. The states have a responsibility as well, but this responsibility has not as yet been clearly defined. A major issue here is the relationship between responsibility and control. This has been a major underlying issue in education nationally as well.

A system of educational finance must be developed for the Navajo Nation which will make possible the fulfillment of federal and state responsibilities and at the same time insure tribal control over management, program development, personnel, curriculum, etc.

This will not be an easy task. All groups concerned must act cooperatively, with complete candor and commitment.

In recent years, Bureau programs and facilities planning have been heavily cost-effectiveness oriented. The intent is laudable, but the results doubtful. One result has been the large boarding school.

These schools have tended to move Navajo education further from the involvement of the Navajo community and further from any viable means of local control by Navajo parents and community members. There is much to indicate that they have had a negative psychological and sociological effect on children and families. Cost-effectiveness programming must be reexamined in the light of human concerns and long range effectiveness.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The nature of the problems created by the educational philosophies and systems imposed on the Navajo Nation for many decades dictates the maintenance of substantially higher funding levels than those sometimes assumed to be adequate. Comparisons of per pupil costs in Navajo education with those found in middle America urban or suburban areas are meaningless.

Other major issues involved in the development of a full management role for the Navajo Nation in education have been well stated in the monographs of Navajo Division of Education and will be repeated in this brief paper.

The eleven programs proposed by Navajo Division of Education fit together to form a sound basis for action. Of these, number one: the establishment of a Navajo Tribal Education Agency is a key step.

BASIC QUESTION

1. How can full support be gained from Bureau and State Agencies for the education plans of the Navajo Tribe?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CONFERENCE
FEDERAL POLICY AND NAVAJO EDUCATION
Albuquerque Convention Center
April 2, 3, 1974

# THE STATE OF NAVAJO EDUCATION

Paper #4: Navajo Professionals (Indian Preference)

THE NAVAJO DIVISION OF EDUCATION
The Navajo Tribe
Window Rock, Arizona

NAVAJO PROFESSIONALS
(Indian Preference)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PART I - ABSTRACT

The Navajo people have experienced one hundred years of ineffectual education as evidenced by achievement deficits, high drop-out rates of Navajo youths, and the existence of vast unemployment rates in the Navajo Nation. Now, the Tribe, the Dine, the Navajo people must be afforded the opportunity of determining their own educational destiny and of formulating, developing, and controlling their own educational institutions. The transformation of present diverse educational enterprises on the Navajo Reservation into a consistent and integrated system relevant to the needs of Navajo youth will require an extensive cadre of Navajo professionals. Such Navajo professionals must be able to design and form a system which emphasizes intensive parental and community involvement in education, and a sophisticated model of bilingual-multi culturalism which expands and develops the Navajo culture through its children, while at the same time equipping them with the skills to cope and function effectively within a multi-cultural society.

The responsibility for the paucity of Navajo professionals now available to accept the role and challenge of self-determination must be placed upon the lack of enforcement of the spirit and intent of the Federal concept of Indian Preference and self-determination in training, promotion, and educational development, and upon the traditional inflexibility of "credentialing" and "qualifying" procedures embedded in state institutions.

Alternative mechanisms for accelerated advancement and development in training, promotion, and leadership must be established to circumvent perennial road blocks to the acquisition of professional status for Navajo educators. Such mechanisms can and should be established, and lie within the realm of power and jurisdiction of Federal and State officials to implement and enforce.

PART II - PERSPECTIVE

The future development of an effective system of Navajo education will depend for its success on the efforts and leadership of a cadre of highly competent Navajo professionals. At the present time, there are limited number of Navajo professionals available. One hundred years of a federally controlled system of education and the more recent onset of State Public schools within the Navajo Nation have produced only six educational doctorates and have incorporated a sparse handful of Navajos into their administrative structures. Out of 3,000 teachers presently operating on the Navajo Reservation, only 200 are Navajos. The vast number of Navajo personnel holding positions in educational institutions are classroom aides, cooks, janitors, dormitory aides, and bus drivers exemplifying the traditional pattern of Indians holding the bulk of lower echelon, sub-professional jobs. And in many cases, some Navajos who have made the professional ranks have done so at the expense of abandoning the Navajo way to conform to the requisites of a quasi-alien culture and institutional framework, which has left little time and motivation for the consideration of education relevant to the Navajo people and its children.

One hundred and forty years have passed since the inception of the concept of Indian Preference and it is obvious from the paucity of Navajo educators, that the intent and spirit as well as the legal requirements of this concept have not and are not being implemented by either Federal or State Agencies. Laws ranging from 1834 through 1908 as cited in the United States Code explicitly spell out and charge Federal Agencies with implementing Indian Preference in educational positions.

Subtle forms of ethno-centricity and institutional bias and racism within the Civil Service System are manifested through the preferential and constraining interpretation of "qualifications" and "promotion" by vested interests bent on maintaining their positions within a status quo power structure. The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, through its establishment of the Excepted Service System attempted to circumvent the biased Civil Service screen and by innuendo, progenerated the concept of competence as being culturally determined and defined in favor of Indian people serving the needs of Indian people. While the precedent for preference in promotion was established by the Freeman vs. Morton Decision of the Circuit Court of District of Columbia in 1972, and still stands as a guide to operational policy, the Mancari vs. Morton Decision against preference on the grounds of violation of civil rights has complicated the issue and brought the concept of preference for clarification into the Supreme Court arena.

Nevertheless, it is crystal clear that the policy, moral force, and directive contained in the Executive Order of President Nixon of July, 1970 in favor of Navajo control of their educational destiny can become a reality. The Navajo Tribe and people through their Division of Education, have expressed the desire for Navajo Teachers, bilingual programs, culturally relevant methods and materials, in short: a system of Navajo education controlled by Navajo people and manned by Navajo personnel, which retains cultural pride and identity in the preservation and development of the Navajo child's ability to function in his own culture, while at the same time nurturing his ability to cope and function within a broad multi-cultural American society. Its obvious that this ideal can only be realized through the rapid development and advancement of qualified bilingual Navajo Teachers and Administrators.

## PART III - ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

1. How can ways be established which recognize competence, a leadership among Navajo educational personnel on lieu of G. S. ratings, college credit, and the usual route of credentials and degrees.
2. How can career ladder be set up that will allow for rapid advancement of all professional Navajo in the field of education.

CONFERENCE
FEDERAL POLICY AND NAVAJO EDUCATION
Albuquerque Convention Center
April 2, 3, 1974

# THE STATE OF NAVAJO EDUCATION

## Paper # 5 Public Schools and Navajo School System

THE NAVAJO DIVISION OF EDUCATION
The Navajo Tribe
Window Rock, Arizona

## Background

At present there are several recognizable thrusts in terms of the type of Navajo education thought to be best suited for Navajos in the thinking of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, public school officials, and Navajo people and leaders. Up until the early 1950's it was felt by all groups that the type of education that should have primary responsibility for educating Navajo students was the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Although there were small public schools existing throughout the Navajo reservation, these schools were primarily for children of employees and not primarily for Navajo students.

During the 1950's, coincidental with the termination craze, there was a great and obvious movement towards placing Navajo children in public schools and closing or eliminating all or most Bureau of Indian Affairs schools. It was during this period of time that the present sizable public school systems were established and developed on the Navajo reservation. During this period of time people within the Bureau thought it was only a matter of time before public schools would take over all of Navajo education.

The push towards the public school slackened during the 1960's, particularly under the efforts of Philleo Nash as Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the enrollment in Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, which had been on the decrease, levelled out and in fact increased.

It was into this period of relative confusion (the mid 1960's) that the concept of tribal or contract schools came into being. The first effort at a so-called Tribal or Contract School was the Lukachukai Demonstration School in 1955/56. This effort failed in terms of Navajo control: yet, it was decided to make another attempt. The Navajo Tribe, the B.I.A. and O.E.O. officials all agreed and selected the new school at Rough Rock for the site of a second effort at community education controlled by the local people. Rough Rock succeeded in terms of the involvement, interest, and support of the local people.

The appearance of Rough Rock opened another alternative to be considered in terms of Navajo education, and realistically opened the concept of Navajo control over Navajo education. Yet, during the approximately ten years that have elapsed since the starting of Rough Rock there have been less than a dozen efforts on the Navajo reservation in which local communities have taken over their education under contract with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. These so-called Contract or Tribal schools now educate something less than 2,500 students.

## Issues for Discussion

The Navajo people think of the three types of education mentioned in the earlier section in these terms:

Public schools are in Navajo thought of as "little white man's schools."

B.I.A. schools are thought of as "Washington's schools."

Tribal or Contract schools are thought of as "Navajos' schools."

This identification on the part of the Navajo certainly is revealing in terms of their thoughts and attitudes towards each of these three kinds of education.

Tribal or Contract Schools provide the easiest opportunity for Navajo control over Navajo education. Nevertheless, to date the Navajo Tribe has been reluctant to pursue with any determination or vigor this type of education.

Some people are surprised at the relatively small numbers of Navajo communities that have selected the Tribal or Contract School alternative. Actually, no one needs to be surprised because the natural concerns that Navajos have are amplified and magnified by representatives of the

other types of schools; particularly with regard to the possible loss of funds if the Tribe or community chooses to go this route. In other words, a community which opts for Community and/or Tribal schools under the contract route is made painfully aware of the fact that funding is less than certain since this type of school in one way eliminates the Bureau of Indian Affairs and in another way places major responsibility on the Tribe and community. Because of this concern many tribal leaders are uncertain in their own mind about the advisability of moving down this road.

Public schools continue to expand in terms of enrollment and certainly in terms of significance, and yet there are no readily available and visible examples of total Navajo community involvement in the operation and administration of these schools. The public schools have a built-in mechanism which makes it possible for the community, through the election of their School Board to have a major voice in the direction these schools take. Unfortunately, the typical pattern that has developed on the Navajo reservation is one wherein the community itself, in spite of an elected School Board, is not intimately involved in the operation of the school. It appears that the Superintendent, because of his expertise and knowledge, is given a major and oftentimes all but exclusive voice in the control and operation of these schools. Nevertheless

the mechanism does exist and certainly someday will be fully utilized in terms of developing the kind of educational opportunities, including the curriculum and administration, which Navajo people and community members want. The Public School does provide an existing mechanism for Navajo control: however, the degree of control is at present tempered by certain state requirements such as in curriculum and certification.

Bureau of Indian Affairs schools have a recognized built-in disadvantage in terms of civil service requirements. As a result, to date only "advisory boards" of Navajo people are involved in the operation and direction of B.I.A. schools. If these advisory boards remain advisory only, then the future of Bureau of Indian Affairs education certainly should be in jeopardy because no group of people in this country should be forced to attend schools over which they have no direct control. On the positive side, it can be said that in certain areas certain Bureau of Indian Affairs schools have been responsive in terms of curriculum improvements and changes.

## Objectives for Navajo Education

While it is not the intent or purpose of this paper to discuss or identify in detail objectives for Navajo education, nevertheless it is necessary to present certain major objectives as recognized by Navajo people in order to better understand the relationship of public schools and a Navajo system of education.

The following list is not meant to be complete, but does represent some of the areas in which there is almost unanimous agreement in terms of objectives for Navajo education:

1. Navajo control over Navajo education.
2. Quality education at all levels.
3. Respect for and teaching of Navajo History, Culture and Language.
4. Vastly increased numbers of Navajo teachers and administrators.

Even from such an incomplete list of objectives, certain facts are clearly discernible:

First, Navajo Tribal and/or Contract Schools provide a most effective means for obtaining all of these objectives.

Second, Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, because of the nature of civil service and B.I.A. require-

ments, are least able to meet all of the objectives readily and easily.

Third, Public Schools, because of the requirements placed upon them by state departments, including certification and curriculum requirements, have certain built-in problems in terms of easily and readily meeting the objectives for Navajo education identified above.

Fourth, Either Public Schools or Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools could be restructured so that the existing objections need not apply. In other words, it is entirely possible that the civil service requirements could, in some way, be eliminated to the degree that they prevent the local community and the Navajo Tribe from having final authority. In the same vein, public school certification and curriculum requirements could be so modified as to allow the Tribe the responsibility to establish regulations in these areas.

In conclusion, it is correct to say that at the present time of the three types of education, the one that seems most

readily able to accommodate the objectives of Navajo education is the Tribal and/or Contract Schools. Furthermore, Public School opportunities are challenging and unlimited. Someday, somewhere, public school education on the Navajo reservation will break existing barriers and provide meaningful and quality education as desired by Navajo people.

CONFERENCE
FEDERAL POLICY AND NAVAJO EDUCATION
Albuquerque Convention Center
April 2, 3, 1974

# THE STATE OF NAVAJO EDUCATION

## Paper # 6 Standards (Certification and Accreditation)

THE NAVAJO DIVISION OF EDUCATION
The Navajo Tribe
Window Rock, Arizona

# STANDARDS AND VALUES

## PART I: ABSTRACT

The growing Navajo Nation and the development of the Navajo School System will require standards of performance for schools and staff. With the Navajo covering three states, there is a need for a single set of standards for the Navajo Nation.

## PART II: PERSPECTIVE

State control of education is legally assigned to bodies created for that purpose by action of the legislatures. These actions are clearly defined by state constitutions. These same legislature have delegated broad and strong powers to their selected bodies, State Boards of Education or State Board of Regents. They have tended to give ministerial powers to the individuals who serve the boards--the state superintendent of schools, state supervisor of public instruction, the chief state school officer. This individual is in turn supported by the State Department of Education, his professional team.

In addition, the Navajo Nation is involved in the policies of BIA schools officials at a variety of levels from Window Rock to Washington.

Problem

How does the Navajo Nation maintain the integrity of its connections with three states, the BIA and a variety of independent, church affiliated agencies while still moving forward to the development of basic standards that are consistent with the integrity of the Navajo.

One possibility is that each governmental unit will give up its legal (written in law) rights to supervise the education of Navajo children. If this were to happen, it is highly unlikely that existing funds would also be transferred. This latter action is not consistent with previous performances of state bodies. Another possibility is the development of a tri-state consortium. There is precedent for such cooperation among southwestern states, i.e., water allotments, etc. Whatever the final arrangements, it seems that a quick and immediate changeover is not likely. Careful and continuing negotiations must be a part of the process.

Standards are values

These three words answer the question of how Navajo standards are different. The Amish in Pennsylvania carried through until a court decision denied the state's

right to demand compulsory education to a specific age. Other questions must deal with the appropriateness of 9 months of school, 50-minute class periods, four walled classrooms, present grading procedures. The answer to these and other questions cannot be answered by this Anglo but must be created by a variety of councils of Navajos.

School systems exist today essentially as they have for many years. Large numbers of educators and parents are clearly satisfied with what exists. It is quite clear that if massive dissatisfactions existed they would result in significant changes. There is a real danger that present Navajo educators, educated and trained by the present system, will reinvent the educational wheel. Only grass roots input by all segments of the Navajo Nation will make it possible to create a new set of standards.

PART III: ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

The issues revolve around the creation of standards for Navajo education which are consistent with the identified values of the Navajo people. The issues address themselves to the difficulty of pulling together the variety of governmental agencies presently in control.

The issues are concerned with the ability of the Navajo Nation to really identify the values which should dictate the standards to be accepted.

1. How can a common set of standards be developed with a multiplicity of agencies with a regulatory powers.
2. How would the standards for the Navajo Nation differ from existing standards.
3. Will the final result be a reissue of standards already in existence.

CONFERENCE
FEDERAL POLICY AND NAVAJO EDUCATION
Albuquerque Convention Center

# THE STATE OF NAVAJO EDUCATION

## Paper #7: Bilingual Education

THE NAVAJO DIVISION OF EDUCATION
The Navajo Tribe
Window Rock, Arizona

# BILINGUAL EDUCATION

## PART I: ABSTRACT

The purpose of the following Position Paper is to argue the case for the extensive development and implementation of bilingual education programs for Navajo youth enrolled in schools on the Navajo Reservation.

## PART II: PERSPECTIVE

One of the most significant aspects of the first community controlled school on the Navajo Reservation (Rough Rock Demonstration School) was its exploration and initiation of a bilingual/bicultural program for its student-body.

Prior to the inception of the Rough Rock Demonstration School, schooling for Navajo youngsters was, and largely remains, predicated upon philosophical assumptions and objectives derived from the expectations and aspirations of non-Navajo adults for their non-Navajo children. It is inevitable then, that when such an educational fabric is draped over Navajo youth, it is perceived for what it is: A BLATANT ATTEMPT TO PROSTRATE THE NAVAJO CULTURE TO THE "CONFORMITY" OF ANOTHER CULTURE! Both in form and content, the schooling which has been imposed upon Navajo youth is essentially a transplantation of the very same models of education developed for and, until recently, contentedly consumed by that illusive entity labeled 'the American middle-class'. THIS IS THE PROBLEM! Navajo children are taught: in a FOREIGN language; FOREIGN concepts; and overwhelmingly, by FOREIGN models! At virtually every level, the educational programs provided Navajo youth negate the fundamental premise that a productive educational experience must be relevant to those it claims to serve.

As a first step, I suggest that we recognize the motive force however well intentioned - behind one hundred years of schooling of Navajo youth: TO ASSIMILATE THE NAVAJO INTO THE HOMOGENEOUS UNIT OF MIDDLE-CLASS AMERICAN SOCIETY.

Composite records for the 1971-72 academic year reveal that there were 50,000 Navajo children between the ages of 5 and 18 enrolled in schools (Bureau of Indian Affairs, the several States' Public Schools, Parochial and other schools). Of those enrolled in BIA and Public schools, 98% and 90%, respectively, were speakers of Navajo. To a lesser extent, 12% and "less than half", respectively, were speakers of English. For the same academic year (1971-72), these children had (or were had by) some 2,200 teachers, all of whom knew English but probably fewer than 100 of whom knew Navajo.[1] For the same period, some 1,700 Navajo students were graduated from the various secondary schools serving this population. Yet, the average number of years of schooling completed by Navajos over the age of twenty-five is just three.[2]

---

1. Spolsky, Bernard, "Advances in Navajo Bilingual Education", Bilingual Education for American Indians, Vol. II, BIA, Washington, D.C., 197

2. Fuchs, Estelle and Havighurst, Robert J., To Live On This Earth, American Indian Education, Double Day & Co., N.Y., 1972, P. 266

Currently, the following school-communities are engaged in varying development and implementation of bilingual education programs for Navajo youth:

Rough Rock Demonstration School

Ramah Navajo High School

Rock Point Community School

Borrego Pass Community School

Cottonwood School

Sanostee Boarding School

Tuba City Public School

Gallup-McKinley County School

Toadlena School

Greasewood School

Pinon School

Recent publications, professional conferences, progressive legislation, and numerous public community meetings repeatedly reflect the determination voiced by grass-roots Navajo leaders that the unique cultural orientation, which is part and parcel of a well conceived bilingual/bicultural program, be promoted by the schools serving their children.

Such evidence clearly indicates that Navajos must launch a new approach to learning, so that their children may grow - not necessarily into the mirror image of the stereotypic middle-class child - but into young citizens capable of helping both themselves and their communities more effectively.

The traditional graded school environment with its lock-step procession through Federal/State/Home Mission Board adopted texts, social promotions, punitive retentions, and teacher parcelled-out information to Navajo youngsters must be abolished, and in tis place there must be the creation of relevant educational programs which value the child's home background and reflect humanistic objectives.

Bilingual/bicultural education provides the desired basic for meaningful community involvement, responsive to the needs and aspirations of Navajo communities, and may facilitate the resolution of larger problems faced by educational institutions which have been the exclusive domain of non-Navajo administrations. Bilingual/bicultural education must be instituted as a viable model for the accomplishment of social change, the enhancement of positive self-identity, and the facilitating in children and adults of the richest development of their potential as productive citizens in both cultures. Meaningful bilingual/bicultural programs establish the desired framework within which trusting relationships between all individuals in the educational community may flourish.

- Recommendations -

To insure the extensive development and implementation of Bilingual/Bicultural programs for Navajo youth, we must examine and question several component or supportive elements.

First, we must start by asking root questions about the status quo.

Secondly, to realize the transfer of control (yes, authority) of organizational structures of the current educational systems affecting Navajo schooling.

Thirdly, to draft and see enacted an enforceable Bilingual/Bicultural Education Act, which Act would state in its Declaration of Policy the recognition and validity of the unique educational needs of large numbers of Navajo children who are monolingual speakers of their language.

The Navajo Tribe must be vested with the equivalent authority of SEA's (State Educational Agencies), whereby it could not only provide financial assistance to local schools which develop and carry out new and imaginative elementary, secondary and junior college programs to meet the unique educational needs of Navajo students, but also empowered to certify capable undergraduate bilingual college students to begin their teaching careers in bilingual classrooms.

That schools serving Navajo children who are monolingual Navajo speakers provide instruction in Navajo (both oral and written) for a 3-4 year period during which the children are acquiring conversational English language skills.

That schools which have monolingual Navajo speaking students utilize English as the medium of instruction only at such time as the children have English language competencies allowing for their creation of sentences and handling of conversational topics.

That schools, individually or cooperatively, create Navajo reading materials for their children to master reading skills in their own language prior to tackling second language reading skills.

That relevant curricula be produced with the audience of Navajo youth foremost in mind.

That there be broad restructuring of school organizational designs to allow for greater flexibility, creativeness, trust, and respect for all participants of schooling concerns.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

That there be provisions for retraining of teachers, supervisors and administrators, and the training of parents and relatives, both Navajo and non-Navajo for the accomplishment of the above restructuring.

That parents and elders be utilized in bilingual classrooms and continue to impart Navajo concepts and values - which legitimately constitute the child's value system - throughout the child's schooling.

That the administrators, teachers and counselors of all bilingual programs be themselves bilingual in Navajo and English.

That the respective Boards of Education be composed of elected members, empowered with policy authority, and having a vested interest in the resolution of school problems; rather than the situation of an advisory board which must await policy decisions from the distant home office.

In conclusion; if we are to earnestly strive for cultural pluralism in the American educational system, and utilize bilingual/bicultural approaches in its attainment, then Navajo education must consider the "other side of the coin", namely, that if Navajo youngsters are to be fluent speakers of and participants in, Navajo and English - then we must also make the same concerted effort to assure non-Navajos working and residing on the Navajo Reservation become Navajo/English bilinguals.

Why should non-Navajos learn Navajo? For precisely the same reasons that Navajos are compelled to learn English:

1) Navajo is the dominant language of the Navajo Reservation
2) Communication is basic to human interaction
3) Effective communication among and between Navajos and non-Navajos stipulates the bilingual approach

4) Interpersonal relationships between Navajos and non-Navajos will be enhanced

and finally 5) The formation of a relevant Navajo Education may be realized.

PART III: ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

1. How can stumbling blocks to bilingual education be overcome?

2. How can support be gained for such an approach to bilingual education?

3. What steps need to be taken now to implement this policy?

CONFERENCE
FEDERAL POLICY AND NAVAJO EDUCATION
Albuquerque Convention Center
April 2, 3, 1974

# THE STATE OF NAVAJO EDUCATION

Paper #8: Guaranteed Education

THE NAVAJO DIVISION OF EDUCATION
The Navajo Tribe
Window Rock, Arizona

"GUARANTEED EDUCATION"

PART I - ABSTRACT

Guaranteed education is a statement of policy: that each and every Navajo will have available an education regardless of his physical, mental, social, or economic limitations. This paper demonstrates the current state of guaranteed education, and suggests the optimum level at which guaranteed education should be available.

PART II - PERSPECTIVE

Although the Treaty of 1868 made a small step toward providing guaranteed education for the Navajo people, its children and youth, such an effort and policy is minor in terms of today's concept of educational needs. Guaranteed education cannot be reduced to books, teachers, and buildings. Rather, in terms of the Federal and State Government obligation and responsibility to the Navajo people, Guaranteed Education must be defined to mean; all necessary human, monetary, and material support will be made available to insure that every Navajo adult and child successfully attains that level of educational achievement that is within his realm of vision, capability, and desire.

Guaranteed education does not mean the continued maintenance of ineffectual systems which bear four (4) to five (5) year achievement deficits, shocking drop out rates, and unemployment rates unparalleled in other sectors of the United States. Rather, guaranteed education must be accountable to the needs and goals of the population served. History, current research, past experience, and concepts of modern educational opportunity cannot be ignored in planning quality education for the Navajo.

The piecemeal short term approaches to patching up disabled educational systems on the Navajo, through "special" supplemental, emergency fundings such as Title I, Title III, Title IV, Title VII, Annual Scholarship Contracting, must be replaced by long range federal commitments manifested by long range policy and fiscal support that is consonant with the Tribal plans for educational development of a Navajo system of education.

At the present time, an estimated thirty (30%) percent of all Navajo school age children (58,443) are in need of some type of special educational services. Less than 1,000 Navajo children are presently receiving any form of educational or rehabilitative service. The incidence of speech, hearing and vision problems are even higher with an identified group of 12,000 Navajo school age children having disabling vision problems. To date, Public Health Services has been unable to provide the glasses needed by this group of children.

In addition, while research and psychological learning theory have for some time established the necessity of bilingual-bicultural programs, many Navajo children suffer daily from the incessant bombardment of solitary English instruction and the imposition and demands of understanding and performing within the context of a strange and alien white middle class culture embedded in the stories, books, materials, personalities, and procedures of the school. This continues in spite of the Supreme Court's (Lau vs. Nichols, 1974), support of the child's rights to be instructed in his native language and the present litigation in the Central Consolidated School District of New Mexico focused on attaining Navajo teachers for Navajo children.

A vast number of adult Navajo require and yet lack the basic education essential for not only social, economic and political development within their own culture, but also the skills necessary for coping with the anglo culture, and, as a result, are continuously victimized in their exchanges.

An estimated 6,000 unemployed and unskilled Navajo young adults (Navajo Manpower Study, 1973), await a system which will enable them to obtain high school equivalency degrees for eligibility into skilled training programs and ultimate entry into the job market.

Unlike their white middle class counterparts, the young Navajo who wishes to pursue goals of higher education, coming from a family wherein the average amount income is only $800, cannot contemplate such unless he receives nearly 100 percent subsidy for educational costs. The year by year uncertain and unstable allocation of funds from federal sources is decreasing while the number of students denied support is increasing annually. Thus, many Navajo youth are robbed of the opportunity to pursue and attain professional training. Such a restriction occurs at a time when the Navajo Nation requires an accelerated expansion of the pool of Navajo professionals cross-cutting all fields of endeavor.

No doubt we see attempts at satisfying the needs, but reaching twenty or fifty percent of the population continues to imply that another percentage of the population will lack the resources to be successful. The economic life of the Navajo people is harsh; over fifty-three (53%) percent of the people received income less than the poverty level. Relate this to a 72.9 percent of Navajo people who have not received a college diploma, and there is little wonder why we feel that for economic independence, the Navajo people must have all the educational opportunity available to every non-Indian in America.

Guaranteed education as framed by the vast educational needs just pointed out can only be made a reality when federal and state agencies make a long range policy and fiscal commitment to rectifying such deficits and by supporting long range Tribal Education Plans.

PART III - ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

The guarantee of education is as sacred as any principle embodied in the constitution, a concept which can no longer be nurtured till puberty than allowed to wither and die as a result of inconsistent policy and the consequent lack of monies. The issue is clear; to what extent will the United State of American make their obligations known, and to what extent will they follow through with the necessary educational programs?

CONFERENCE
FEDERAL POLICY AND NAVAJO EDUCATION
Albuquerque Convention Center
April 2,3, 1974

# THE STATE OF NAVAJO EDUCATION

## Paper #9: School Board Authority

THE NAVAJO DIVISION OF EDUCATION
The Navajo Tribe
Window Rock, Arizona

# SCHOOL BOARD AUTHORITY

## PART I: ABSTRACT

The Navajo people are faced with the challenge which will determine the future of the Navajo people. The heart of this challenge lies in being able to create an environment that will properly motivate Navajo children to aspire to educational goals as a part of the principle of the Navajo people becoming masters over their own destiny.

Quality of educational and equality of educational opportunity for the Navajo people is an uppermost concern on the Navajo Reservation. Those who share this concern can work together toward solutions that will be enduring ones, enduring because they will represent decisions by Navajos and solutions that will make possible the full and wholesome growth of the Navajo people. The time for the Navajo people to take their place in American's future is now and the people have every faith and confidence that this can be done if the challenge is accepted and the best in education and the best in us are brought to Navajo youth.

This position paper will, for the first time, suggest the provision of and indepth involvement of the Navajo people in the planning and administrative decisions of educational programs. Such involvement will not only affect the lives of their children, but the future development of the Navajo people.

PART II: PERSPECTIVE

Current State - What It Is

Prolonged Bureau of Indian Affairs domination of Navajo services program has served to retard, rather than enhance the progress of the Navajo people and it has denied to the Navajo people an effective voice in the planning and implementation of programs. The Navajo people will never surrender their desire to control their relationship, both among themselves and with outside forces.

All BIA schools comply with laws, rules and regulations of the state they operate in, unless these laws are superseded by federal laws, rules, and regulations. Presently, the BIA has advisory school boards but they have no legal powers. By the virtue of appointment or elected by the school or community to the board, members are, as a body, authorized to advise the local chief school administrator on the instructional programs, on employment and personnel, on school finance, on pupil services, and on school community relations; but this is not always true in every school. What we have now concerning BIA schools, is a reaction board; rather than an action board. The Bureau of Indian Affairs responsibility for all areas of Navajo education has not effected the desired level of educational achievement or created the diverse opportunities and personal satisfaction which education can and should provide for Navajo school age children and adults.

In the public schools, the state legislature delegates to local school boards legal powers and these powers are usuallly specified in a School Code or Education Code. Other codes include rules and regulations

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

for state departments of education, which are usually delegated broad rule-making powers by the legislature. The legal framework of any school governing board is that of a public body and is, therefore, governed by law and regulations which the body adopts. Each board must become acquainted with the legal requirements, rules, and regulations which affect the operation of schools. Members cannot be expected to have a complete knowledge of all legal matters, but they must have an understanding of the basic provisions of school laws. When specific problems arise, which need legal interpretations, these should then be referred to legal advisors for consultation.

What Is Wrong

The BIA has maintained paternalistic control over the largest Indian Tribe in America. The Navajo people have little or no voice in their own affairs, and the local school board does not control or even affect the decision-making processes involved in local school administration or basic school operation.

The process of budget cutting by the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of the Budget, and their final appropriations demonstrates that the service programs designed to preserve the Navajo reservation and the Trust status received inadequate or no funding support while those programs that take the Navajo away from his home and reservation, such as Employment Assistance for Relocation in urban areas received ample appropriation. The schools are located in remote and poor areas. Most Navajo children must leave their homes and wait for a school bus by the road. Poor road conditions impassable at times due to rain and snow, compounded with students meeting

inflexible bus schedules are major factors in the poor attendance record of many Navajo children. Dropout and kick out rate is unusually high at all of the schools-around 68%. Teacher turnover is also very high at most of the schools, while at schools in remote areas, the turnover rate may rise as high as 78% annually. The teachers at the schools have a number of characteristics in common. They are either quite young or quite old, with very few in the age range between 30 and 45. As a result, a large number of the teachers are either inexperienced or else are teaching according to precepts and methods learned at a time when educational philsophy was radically different from today. The BIA theoretically draws teachers from anywhere in the United States.

Only about eight percent (8%) of Navajo children in elementary schools have Navajo teachers or principals, and in some schools, teachers are acting principals and Navajo teacher aides are acting teachers, because of unfilled positions. Hiring procedures for Bureau Personnel is a time consuming element.

Achievement level of Navajo children is 3 or 4 years below those of other non-Navajo students. The fact is that the Navajo child falls progressively farther behind the longer he stays in school if he does not drop out or get kicked out.

There are no quick and easy solutions but clearly, effective education lies at the heart of any lasting solution of the Navajo people accepting the challenge of becoming masters over their own destiny.

The Navajo people believe in the total development of each child according to his ability, interests, needs, and ambitions; the Navajo

people also believe that each child should develop his basic skills, especially the communication skills, so he or she may live and serve as a useful, productive and wholesome citizen. The Navajo people also believe that Navajo youths should be taught to place the highest value on their heritage and to have instilled into their hearts and minds the deepest sense of loyalty to this great nation.

Education of children is one of the first concerns of all who care for individual development, for progress, for the preservation of the cultural heritage, for the nourishment of diversity and the democratic process, and for the preservation and improvement of the American way of life.

The legal powers to establish and operate BIA Schools is vested in the Commissioner of Indian Affairs by Congress. The Commissioner will and can authorize BIA School Boards to exercise some of these powers in his behalf, similar to the state legislature delegating legal power to the local school boards.

Because of the proposed BIA Manual Provisions relating to Indian School Boards-62 BIAM, the repeated efforts to communicate this policy to the field, including the existing provision of Volume 20 of the Bureau Manual, and Deputy Assistant Secretary William Rogers' telegram of May 24, 1973, to all Area Directors on this point, has caused considerable uncertainty as to what Bureau policy is in this area. However, it may be noted that Section 17.5 and 17.6 of the Manual makes very clear that the school administrators will continue to call the shots and the school board will act solely in an advisory capacity unless

it takes over operation of the school under a contract. Section 17.9, "Funds contained in the contract for school board operations should not exceed funds that would be available under direct Bureau funding." This provision should be revised to make it crystal clear that total Bureau support for a contract school will not be diminished. Bureau schools receive federal financial support in such areas as Plant Management, Data Processing Costs, Procurement, and etc., which do not show up in a school's own BIA Budget. This proposed Indian School Board Manual will not give legal power to the local school boards.

On March 6, 1968, in a special message of the late President Lyndon B. Johnson to the Congress of the United States, contained a strong and the first Presidential statement in history advocating local control of schools by the Indian community. Quote from that message: "To help make the Indian school a vital part of their Indian community, I am directing the Secretary of the Interior to establish Indian School Boards for Federal Indian Schools. School Board members are selected by their communities and will receive whatever training is necessary to enable them to carry out their responsibilities."

This was followed by an equally forceful statement by Mr. Richard M. Nixon in his Presidential Message of July 7, 1970, wherein he stated the following: "Consistent with our policy that the Indian community should have the right to take over the control and operation of federally funded programs, we believe every Indian community wishing to do so should be able to control its own Indian Schools. The control should be exercised by school boards throughout the nation."

One significant part about these two statements is that nowhere in each message is any reference made to Indian School Boards as being advisory in nature.

Past history of effectiveness of Indian Advisory Council or Boards, along with what consultation has come to mean in actual practice, does not insure that the best programs or educational activities will come about for the Navajo people or their students.

PART III: ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

Whether or not the Commissioner is willing to accept the challenge with the Navajo people in complying with the Congress and the two Presidential Messages is the main issue.

1. What can be done to give local Bureau Schools boards the power to make decisions regarding budget, hiring, and educational programs?
2. What can be done to educate public school boards to give them the expertise to make the critical decisions necessary for effective directions of their schools?

CONFERENCE
FEDERAL POLICY AND NAVAJO EDUCATION
Albuquerque Convention Center
April 2,3, 1974

# THE STATE OF NAVAJO EDUCATION

Paper #10: Early Childhood

THE NAVAJO DIVISION OF EDUCATION
The Navajo Tribe
Office of Navajo Economic Opportunity
Fort Defiance, Arizona

# NAVAJO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

## PART I: Abstract

Irregardless of the original motives for the inception of early childhood programs on the Navajo Reservation, such programs as Headstart have been well established as unique institutional forms in the communities they serve. Headstart programs have developed distinctive mechanism's for parental-community involvement, the inclusion of different methods and culturally relevant materials, as well as recognizing and developing outstanding teacher competencies among local community residents.

It is the position of this paper that if the rich fruits of Headstart are to be absorbed into traditionally established educational enterprises on the Navajo, there must be an orchestration of efforts among Headstart and other educational agencies, including such ancillary agencies as Public Health Services. In addition, competency must be recognized and accepted with equity in relation to academic credentialling in order that talented products of early childhood programs can be infused into the existent traditional education structures.

## PART II: Perspective

Throughout its history the Federal Government has had a unique relationship to the Indians. It is based on the government's trusteeship for certain Indian lands, on appropriations made by the Congress for certain programs, and on the government's willingness to facilitate the progress of the descendants of the original inhabitants of this country. Regarding the Navajo Nation, various governmental services are channeled to the reservation through such agencies as the BIA, HUD, PHS, DOL, ONAP, EDA, etc. All of these agencies, with varying degrees of effectiveness,

have been seeking to improve the conditions of the reservation by attacking under-employment, poverty and its related problems.

Not until the establishment of the Office of Navajo Economic Opportunity in 1965, did the concept of Indian Self-Determination become a potential reality. ONEO finally gave the Navajo people a chance of their own to find Navajo solutions for Navajo problems.

Since its beginning, the ONEO Child Development Program has done its best to meet the educational needs of the children, social needs of their families, and professional needs of our staff members. Over the years we have tried to provide an enlightening, stimulating, and highly enjoyable learning environment in each of our 101 Headstart centers scattered throughout the Navajo Nation. For the children who are entering a classroom for the first time in their lives, we want their pre-school experience to turn them on to further education, not off. English is taught, so too is Navajo language and traditions. The importance of a bi-cultural educational experience for our young children cannot be overemphasized.

Recognizing the fact that not all pre-school aged children who want to attend school are able to do so for geographical, medical, or any other reason, we are taking our learning programs into the homes of selected families. Navajo Homestart is now serving approximately 100 families in four isolated target areas on the Reservation. And plans are now being made to institute our own "Portage Project" which will reach physically and mentally handicapped children in their homes, who up until now have had no formal education whatsoever.

All of our educational programs stress the importance of parental involvement. The parents are not only encouraged to take an active role in the educational experience of their children, but to learn

right along with them. Parental participation and feedback is a must for all of our programs. Their ideas, suggestions, and criticisms are always welcome by our staff who are attempting to meet the day to day needs of the pre-schoolers and their families.

Many staff members of the Child Development Program are hired from low income families. Some of these individuals have had little or no formal education, but their competence in working with children is unquestionable. Too often in the past, low income has been correlated with limited ambition, itelligence, or ability. However, the experience of our program has shown that in many "poor areas" there are many people who have the capabilities and desire to work with children. With this in mind, we have established a comprehensive career development program which is giving all of our employees a chance to further their education.

We feel that the Child Development Program has made progress in meeting the needs of the children, their parents, and our staff. However, much more needs to be done.

One way to further progress in the Early Childhood Education field is to discuss openly the problems which our program is facing today. We hope that by discussing the following issues, recommendations for possible solutions will be obtained from those assembled here.

The Child Development Associate Training Program was implemented on the Reservation in the fall of 1973. This is a National Program which has as its aim the certification of Early Childhood Teachers, utilizing a competency based approach. There are many Navajo Headstart teacher and

aides participating in this program, and to date, the response has been very enthusiastic. However, while this program has been instituted on a nation wide basis, there is to date little recognition on the part of public school agencies, of the competencies that the CDA certificate represents. On the reservation specifically, there is a need to recognize the CDA Training Program, and to incorporate the CDA competencies into the overall framework of certification requirements for Early Childhood teachers. If our teachers are well trained, and certified as competent Early Childhood Educators, then they should be able to move into both the public and BIA educational systems in terms of job opportunities. With regard to program goals and objectives, inconsistencies exist between the Headstart program and many of the BIA and public school kindergarten program to which Headstart children go. Essentially, the Headstart philosophy reflects a more "open education" type approach, with provision for a lot of involvement of the child with his environment, and opportunity for maximum parental involvement. Many of the Headstart children who move into the more rigid and traditional educational systems of BIA and public school kindergarten, experience frustration and difficulty. Common complaints from receiving teachers are that the Headstart children are too noisy, or don't know how to behave, etc. In addition, pressure in being put on Headstart teacher to formally instruct the children in letters, colors, numbers, etc., so that the children will be "ready" for kindergarten.

The Washington office of the Office of Child Development encourages local programs to develop and maintain competent staff to insure a high quality of service to Headstart families and children. Due to the fact that we are unable to compete with local schools in the area of salaries and fringe benefits, there is tremendous personnel turnover rate every year. Many Headstart Programs all over the country face the same problem

of investing much time and money into the training of personnel, only to have them leave after a short time.

The goals and philosophy of the Office of Child Development continually emphasize the importance of parental involvement in the Headstart Program. Each Headstart Program on the reservation has a Parent Advisory Council that has the authority to make decisions about the educational goals of the local program, and provides advice to the teacher and staff about the needs of the children, and advice on other matters related to the operation of the Headstart Program in that community. However, it seems that both public-BIA schools on the reservation provide little opportunity for parents to be involved in the school program. Title I PAC groups play only a token role in the formulation of educational policies, and time and time again we hear of complaints from parents and local people that their child is virtually lost to them once he or she leaves Headstart for a regular school program.

Children whose parents have higher incomes than the OEO poverty guidelines are ineligible for free Headstart services. Often Navajo children, even though their parents have higher incomes, are educationally handicapped by the time they enter school due to the fact that they are totally unfamiliar with a school setting. They have not socialized with their peers in large numbers, and often they are unable to speak English. This problem indicates a need for all Navajo children to be eligible for Headstart. With respect to the eligibility guideline there are many children who live in communities where there is only a Headstart or a Day Care Center. If the child lives in a community with only a Day Care Program, and his parents cannot afford to pay the Day Care fee, he or she must go without service. If a child lives in a community with only a Headstart Program, and does not meet the income guidelines, then that child must also go without service. The most recent population figures

on children from 0-5 years of age is 14,264. Of this number, 2,168 children from 3 to 5 years are being served in 101 Headstart Centers, 90 children are served by Homestart, and 530 children, ages 1-6 years are being served in eight (8) Day Care Centers. If we consider the need for early identification, and the need for a total range of social and educational services for children from birth to five years, then over 11,000 children presently remain with no services at all. The problem of lack of services is only compounded when unrealistic Federal economic guidelines force us to turn away children who do have some access to service but who are considered "ineligible".

In the Homestart Program a case was reported where a 6-year old child was unable to walk. He had been carried around since birth and none of the multifarious social service agencies has as much as discovered the child's handicap. Clearly there is a need to provide health screening for infants, and to develop a case roster of children who may be "highrisk." While PHS has the primary responsibility for health care services, there as yet exists no system to insure delivery of service to the child and her family, nor any system whereby young children and infants with handicap can be identified and moved into the service system.

Another problem area faced by the Child Development Program on the Navajo Reservation is the lack of adequate facilities for the pre-school program. Many of our pre-schools are operating programs in less than standard facilities, with inadequate heating, lighting and plumbing. Many programs are being operated in chapter houses because there are either no separate facilities are so inadequate that Headstart has been forced to take the program out. While Headstart receives some funding each year to assist with facilities, the funding is not sufficient to meet our needs.

There are many service agencies operating on the reservation. Each

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

agency is doing its own thing in its own way. All agencies operating in helping educating professions need to establish better lines of communication, no one agency can deal with all of the problems associated with developing an effective system of services for Early Childhood education. A greater awareness of Early Childhood needs to be developed in tribal, state and federal leaders before we can be sure that adequate services will some day be provided to young Navajo children.

PART III: Issues and Questions

1. How do we achieve recognition of the CDA competencies equal to a temporary or provisional teaching certificate in the states of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah, as well as the Bureau of Indian Affairs?

2. How do we insure equal employment opportunities for our Navajo Early Childhood teachers?

3. How do we achieve program integration and consistency of philosophy and objectives between Headstart Programs and the receiving public and Bureau educational institutions?

4. How do we solve the problem of a high personnel turnover rate that makes it difficult to maintain a consistent and qualitative educational program?

5. How do we get public and Bureau schools to recognize the importance of parental involvement, and actually do something about it?

6. Given the vast geographic distances, poor roads and present minimal level of health care services, how do we go about establishing an effective system of health care and preventive care services?